

Downingtown Music Parents Association Board Meeting

March 8, 2016 – Downingtown East High School Choir Room

The meeting was called to order at 6:42 pm by President Donna Beard.

Also present were Susan Chindemi, VP East; Kathy Collier, VP STEM; Patrice Costanzi, Treasurer; Kristy Deischer-Eddy, Secretary East; Jan Lassen, Secretary West; Nancy Chew, Ways & Means East; Shawna Powel, Ways & Means STEM; Kyle Costanzi, Director Food Services; Ed Otto, Band Director West; and Matt McCloskey, Choir Director West. Also present were parents from Indoor Drumline and Neal Johnson, Director of Food Services Elect.

Approval of February 9, 2016 Minutes: some spelling errors were pointed out and the minutes were accepted as corrected.

Donna Beard asked that all approved minutes for 2015-16 be e-mailed to her to be posted on the website. Those that are not approved should be e-mailed to her for distribution to everyone and approval at the next meeting.

Board Open Positions: Donna Beard stated that currently President & Treasurer are open. Nobody has expressed interest. MPA could go without a president but not without a treasurer. Interest had been expressed by Karolyn Withka & Deanna Bradley for the Secretary-West position, and Michelle Nedved expressed interest in the VP-West position.

Donna Beard asked what the plan is for presenting the slate.

Patrice Costanzi stated that the slate should be presented in April for voting in May. The new officers would take over July 1.

Concessions issues: Kyle Costanzi stated that he handed the keys over to Neal Johnson last week. The e-mail information still has to be turned over; please change over his name to Neal's on the website.

Patrice stated that it's important that Neal run things in spring with Kyle as backup.

Donna stated she personally thanks Kyle for his hard work over the years. She asked Neal to send whatever information he wanted on the website sent to her.

Gifts: Donna Beard stated that the possibility of commissioning a piece of music as a retirement gift for both Brent Lewis and Sherry Beard was discussed at the February meeting. They would not be done in

time by this year, but it would be something to present next year (with a plaque or something similar) to present to them for now. What is the expected cost?

Matt stated that the approximate cost for Brent's commissioned piece would be \$4,000.00 for R.W. Smith. The cost for Sherry's piece could be about the same, but that cost is based on the length of the piece and the grade (difficulty) of the music.

Patrice stated that when Doug Bennett retired, MPA gave four scholarships of \$1,000 each for every year of the kids he taught. People know what we spent on him, how could we not spend that same amount for Brent and Sherry?

Donna Beard asked if the money should be given to the students instead.

Patrice stated it's a question of if MPA is in the business to give out scholarships or in the business to put money into the music program.

Matt McCloskey stated that he didn't think the dollar amount matters so much.

Jan Lassen stated that the real question is what would be meaningful to each of them?

Matt stated that there is a Facebook page with a call to alumni to come back to the April 15 (orchestra) concert. That's tough because a lot of them are still in school & wouldn't be able to come back.

Patrice stated that for Bennett's retirement, the kids had a couple of secret rehearsals for his favorite march and then a reception after the concert in the cafeteria.

Susan Chindemi stated that the kids could do something they want to plan and MPA could do something on its own.

Ed Otto stated that if a gofundme page was started, it could blow up in a good way. This is Brent's first teaching gig (35 years), but this is Sherry's second (totaling 37 years). Some of our advertisers (Sean the waterproofing guy—a former student of Brent's—and the HVAC guy) would want to donate some money to it. If we put a plea out there for donations, we could say here are the proposed arrangers and their bios. There are a *lot* of former students in the community and parents that might want to contribute. We could present a certificate of commitment for the commissioning of the piece and then have them back a year from now to conduct the piece(s). If we're talking grade three or four, there wouldn't be time to rehearse the pieces. Brent's could be called "This One is For Water" or "Again!" He's worked with Jay Bobcook (Furhman Univeristy chair who arranges stuff). For now, we could have a presentation in May at the small ensemble concert. We could pick something from Brent's first year; there should be some kids from the jazz band that could perform it. We could have alumni back for that sort of thing without telling him. We'll have a date soon but will be later part of May. We could say something at the Memorial Day parade too.

Patrice asked Susan if she could contact Brent's wife to get a feel for what she thinks he would want.

Matt stated that Brent's retirement will not be public knowledge until Thursday, since it's on the green sheets for the School Board meeting tomorrow.

Donna Beard asked if the commissioned pieces were the desire of the MPA.

There was a motion and second; motion carried.

A parent stated that there are some crazy rumors and speculation for what's going to happen with the program next year.

Ed stated that the string position is now posted. The band position will be posted after tomorrow.

Financials: Patrice stated that these are not available for tonight. We got the first request for Post Prom donations from West. The requests for the other two high schools probably aren't far behind.

There was a motion and second to give \$100 to each post prom committee. All in favor.

Indoor drum line: Donna stated that the indoor drumline group came to her saying that they're \$9,000 over budget. The major reason is because they don't have an indoor show like they did last year (the door alone was \$7,000).

Ed stated that they lost the show through no fault of their own. The reason they didn't award us the show is because of complaints of the logistics. That funds the indoor program from all 3 schools. The district does not really pay for it except for a few busses with leftover funds from last year.

Patrice stated that the show got pulled out from under them. The season is already underway. This was the first year in four they ordered uniforms. It's likely not going to be as high as \$9,000. The Dayton trip is totally separate thing.

An indoor drumline parent stated that she was worried about going to Dayton this year. We started with some money going into the season. Then we lost the ad program book for the show we didn't get to host, and then we lost the 8th grade clinic because we cannot go into the middle schools to recruit any more. It was an expensive band year. And it's a \$300 participation fee plus \$550 per kid for the Dayton trip. We're trying to get corporate sponsors. We're talking about building the program and we cannot sustain a program without hosting a show.

Patrice stated that as a budgetary thing, this is a program that's 35 kids max. It's a lot of money per kid. The benefit is it helps the marching band for the fall. I don't know if MPA wants to sustain that going forward.

An indoor drumline parent stated that she doesn't want to come to MPA for any more money. We are doing our best but we cannot make up for an \$8000 deficit.

Susan asked why they were no longer going into middle schools. As a parent of an 8th grade percussion student, I find that offensive.

Ed stated he didn't know why.

Patrice stated that West is hosting the indoor guard Chapters in April. The participants of the Chapters show compete for the chance to go to Wildwood which is the East Coast finals. There's a fundraising opportunity there for MPA, since there will be concessions. The program gets proceeds of the door.

Ed stated that the indoor drumline was set up as an extension of the music program. They used to have gym time to rehearse, except for the last 3 years. We need to go to the district to get that time back.

Kyle asked if the MPA could give the indoor drumline the concession money from indoor guard Chapters.

Patrice stated that her motion is to let them go forward with the program for this year. We'll see what the deficit ends up being. I can't see MPA sustaining it past this year in this way. As of right now, it's got to continue. Know that it's running a deficit, know that as parent we have to support them. Do we say next year, go out there to have a fundraiser? Let's see where we end up.

Matt stated that he would pitch getting the gym back for practice and fix the logistical problem to get the show back.

A parent stated that they didn't understand why West was the only place to host a show. Why can't we have something at East?

Patrice stated that it's a nuisance issue for the Township.

The indoor drumline parent stated that they have offered to change the entrance/exit it to a swinging gate, and we have the people to do it. Just know that during the winter months that we're representing Downingtown.

Patrice's motion to allow the indoor drumline to continue with MPA covering the deficit was seconded and the motion carried.

Troy asked where they stood on the club versus activity issue.

Donna stated that they should go to Pia (actively attends School Board meetings) and pick her brain for how to pursue that.

Liability (if any) of trips – MPA pass-through account: Drumline parent Troy stated that the church where they will be rehearsing for the championships in Dayton is asking for a waiver. Last year they claimed our bus bumped their gate. The damage was denied by Krapf's. This year, the rehearsal request was approved by the church trustees, but they want a signature of indemnity clause for insurance.

Ed stated he was going to talk to (the District's Chief Financial Officer) Rich Fazio about it tomorrow.

Donna stated that she put this item on the agenda, because what is the exposure we have when we've signed the checks for something.

Another parent stated that if we are a 501.c.3, then we should have Directors & Officers insurance. Technically, we should have coverage through that. It covers us for the things we do fiscally.

Donna asked if that covered us on that exposure. Do we need a small committee to look into this? We have an attorney that we've gone to in the past, but we need to know what questions to ask.

Yet another parent stated that there are general liability policies for non-profits. They aren't that expensive.

Another parent stated that even if it's a pass-through account, every other piece in the chain assumes liability. I thought it was the school district's responsibility since they approved the trip.

Donna stated that's what we're going to find out.

Fundraisers: Joe Corbi's is about to launch, and we have a proposal for a fundraiser that Ed brought to us that we can discuss at the general meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.